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at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 55th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. KRENKEL	(Austria)
later:	Mr. DEKANY (Vice-Chairman)	(Hungary)
later:	Mr. KRENKEL (Chairman)	(Austria)

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* Items considered together.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued)

(b) HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS (continued) (A/47/24 and Add.1, A/47/353, 434, 445, 479, 501-504, 552, 626, 630, 668, 701 and A/47/702; A/C.3/47/L.49)

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AGENDA ITEM 149: THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA (continued) (A/47/247; A/C.3/47/9)

1. Mr. WILLIS (Australia) said that the international community must make a concerted effort to bridge the gap between professed commitment to human rights and practical implementation of those rights by developing mechanisms to ensure the effective enjoyment by all people of fundamental human rights and freedoms. That was particularly important in view of the threat to the credibility of the human rights system posed by the flagrant abuses taking place in conflicts such as those in the former Yugoslavia and in Somalia. The scale of those abuses reflected a human tragedy that the international community must respond to.

2. The holding of special sessions of the Commission on Human Rights was a means of focusing international attention in a timely way on human rights emergencies in order to deal with serious human rights violations. The Commission should cooperate closely with other United Nations bodies, including the Third Committee, in that regard. Since human rights were the concern of all mankind, international action aimed at improving them could not be rejected as interference in the internal affairs of States. An approach aimed at finding common ground and developing understanding and dialogue was far more likely to achieve lasting results than one based on confrontation and took no account of local circumstances. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights provided a timely opportunity for all countries to engage in constructive dialogue, reaffirm their commitment to universal human rights principles and work together to establish agreed courses of action for the implementation of those principles. The Conference should endorse greater efforts towards the universal ratification of basic human rights instruments and broader monitoring of their implementation, and should support effective human rights education and training at all levels to strengthen infrastructures for the promotion and protection of human rights in all countries.

(Mr. Willis, Australia)

3. The active promotion of respect for the human rights of all individuals, insistence on the rule of law, and the establishment of effective democratic institutions were essential safeguards to prevent violations of human rights. The United Nations could offer assistance in the holding of free and fair elections and provide advice on drawing up constitutions and establishing national institutions for the protection of human rights. His delegation welcomed the activities carried out by the United Nations in those areas and supported their further expansion.

4. Australia commended the efforts being made to strengthen exchanges between the United Nations and regional human rights organizations. In that regard, Australia welcomed the holding in Jakarta in 1993 of a regional workshop on human rights institution-building and had pledged its assistance. The dissemination of information about human rights was a key element of any strategy to promote and protect human rights. Australia attached particular importance to that aspect of United Nations activities and commended its draft resolution on that subject to the Third Committee. The radical changes occurring in the world were placing increasing demands on the United Nations human rights system. The Centre for Human Rights must be strengthened in order to fulfil its ever-increasing tasks.

5. In many countries of the world, thousands of people continued to be the victims of massive human rights violations. In Myanmar, an unrepresentative military regime continued to repress the desire of the people for democratic government and full enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms. That appalling situation had resulted in massive flows of refugees to neighbouring countries. The return of those people to their homeland in safety and dignity was being hindered by the refusal of the Myanmar authorities to allow the relevant United Nations agencies to monitor repatriation. Australia once again called on the Myanmar authorities to release imprisoned political leaders and work with them to democratize and rebuild the country.

6. The human rights situation in Iraq continued to be of grave concern. The Government systematically repressed its own citizens and persecuted the Kurd and Shiite communities. The proposed system of human rights monitors would provide a reliable source of information about the human rights situation in Iraq and the Government of that country should extend its full cooperation to the Special Rapporteur. Australia also called on the Government of Iraq to release immediately all hostages from Kuwait and other States who had been arbitrarily detained in Iraq since the Gulf war.

7. Reports of arbitrary arrests and executions continued to mark the human rights situation in Iran. Australia noted with concern that Iran had discontinued its cooperation with the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights and that the persecution of the Baha'i community continued. Australia called upon the Iranian authorities to ensure full respect for the human rights of its citizens and to resume cooperation with the Special Representative.

(Mr. Willis, Australia)

8. His country was seriously concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in the Sudan. There were credible reports of increasing violations of human rights by the Government and the armed forces, particularly with regard to Sudanese minority groups displaced by the civil war. Australia was also very concerned about the safety of Sudanese and international aid workers in that country and the actions by Sudanese authorities which impeded the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The Government should provide access for diplomats and officials of international organizations to areas where human rights violations had been reported and should ensure that its international human rights obligations were fully met. The situation warranted urgent attention by the Commission on Human Rights, including consideration of the appointment of a special rapporteur.

9. The failure of Somalia's warring factions to cooperate with United Nations humanitarian relief efforts was prolonging the suffering of the Somali people. Australia appealed to the factions to help end the human tragedy and cooperate with the United Nations.

10. The abominable policy of ethnic cleansing encompassed a horrifying catalogue of human rights abuses in the former Yugoslavia. The second report by the Special Rapporteur (A/47/635) made it abundantly clear that the aims of ethnic cleansing were being achieved, especially in Serbian-controlled areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Australia condemned such policies and called for those responsible for violations of humanitarian law to be brought to account. His country supported the efforts of the European Community and United Nations negotiators to prevent a widening of that conflict and restore peace in the region, and welcomed the establishment, pursuant to Security Council resolution 780 (1992), of the Commission of Experts to deal with war crimes. He expressed satisfaction at the strong resolution adopted at the recent second special session of the Commission on Human Rights, which condemned the widespread violations of humanitarian law and the abuse of basic human rights, in particular the odious practice of ethnic cleansing. The conflict must not be allowed to spread to other areas of tension, especially Kosovo. All parties should engage in dialogue under the auspices of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia and find peaceful solutions through negotiations.

11. Mr. SZELEI (Hungary) said that the issue of human rights could not be considered an internal affair of any State. Respect for human rights, including the rights of minorities, was essential in order to ensure stability and security. Despite the end of the cold war, totalitarian and nationalist regimes were desperately resisting the tide of democracy. The United Nations should continue to play a central role in strengthening the rule of law by promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. More than a year earlier in the Committee, his delegation had drawn attention to grave and systematic violations being committed in Yugoslavia and had called for institutional arrangements by the United Nations to monitor the human rights situation there. In light of the tragic developments since then in the former Yugoslavia, that appeal had proved to be an understatement. The

(Mr. Szelei, Hungary)

Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights had reported the continuation of a nightmare of grave violations of human rights. Hungary wholeheartedly welcomed the establishment of the Commission of Experts to investigate violations of humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia.

12. There was an alarming situation in Vojvodina, where basic human rights as well as the minority rights of almost half a million Hungarians were being systematically violated by the Serbian authorities. In the Serbian-occupied areas of Croatia, the situation was becoming worse. Tens of thousands of Hungarians and other minorities from Vojvodina and Slavonia had fled their ancestral lands. Those who stayed there lived in an atmosphere of constart danger, harassment and intimidation. The Serbian authorities had recently resumed the forced mobilization of Hungarians and were planning to resettle Serbian refugees in Vojvodina, thereby extending the policy of ethnic cleansing to that area. Hungary reiterated its call for international protection of the human rights of the Hungarian and other minorities in Vojvodina and expected the United Nations Protection Force to take vigorous steps to safeguard those rights. The future of those minorities could be ensured through territorial and cultural autonomy under international guarantees. His delegation also called for the long-term deployment of monitoring groups of observers in Vojvodina.

13. Hungary continued to be profoundly concerned about the systematic and massive violations of human rights in Iraq, of which there was irrefutable evidence. Repression of the population, including the Kurdish minority living outside the United Nations protected areas, was cause for grave concern. He urged the Iraqi Government to observe its international human rights obligations and to account for the civilians and prisoners of war who had been forcibly taken from Kuwait to Iraq.

14. While acknowledging improvement in the overall human rights situation in Romania, Hungary remained concerned about the slowing pace of democratization, deliberate discrimination against minorities and lack of an independent judiciary. It was hoped that the Government of Romania would pay appropriate attention to the observations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights in his final report. The legitimate demands of the Hungarian minority, such as the lifting of restrictions on the use of their language in education and in judicial procedures, should be met.

15. In Myanmar, the democratically and freely expressed will of the people continued to be rejected by the ruling military regime. The authorities in that country should take prompt action to end human rights violations, the forced resettlement programmes and the persecution of minorities. All political prisoners should be released and the rights of minorities respected.

16. In the case of Cuba, the Government had refused once again to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights. Hungary regretted that the Cuban authorities continued to defy the legitimate concern of the international community, particularly since Cuba was a member of the

(Mr. Szelei, Hungary)

Commission. He urged them to end human rights violations, release all those imprisoned for exercising their basic human rights and cooperate with the Special Rapporteur.

17. Hungary attached particular importance to the adoption of the draft declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (A/47/501, annex). Protection of minorities, including innovative preventive protection measures to safeguard their rights, would contribute to international peace and security. The codification of standards for the protection of minorities was an immediate task for the international community. A wide range of measures must be taken in that regard, including establishment of a system of international guarantees with the active participation of the United Nations, the sending of fact-finding and monitoring missions, appointment of a special rapporteur and the establishment of an international tribunal on the protection of minority rights.

18. The ever-widening use of United Nations electoral assistance to enhance the effectiveness of the principle of free and periodic elections was a most promising avenue for promoting human rights. Hungary looked forward to the successful implementation of the decision to observe the referendum in Eritrea.

19. Mr. HYON HAK BONG (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights would be an important occasion for solving urgent human rights problems, including prevention of foreign military intervention, the elimination of racial discrimination, ensuring non-selectivity and promoting the right to self-determination and development. Priority should be given to respect for the right of all countries and peoples freely to choose their political and social system and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

20. In his delegation's view, all categories of human rights were indivisible. There was a tendency to divorce civil and political rights from human rights and to give them priority. Yet economic, social and cultural rights constituted the material basis for human rights and must not be excluded. Accordingly, many countries stressed the importance of the right to development. There had been no discussion of the issue of responsibility for the unequal international economic relations, the external debt burden and the imposition of political conditions, all of which aggravated the human rights situation in the world. The question of human rights should not be used for political purposes. The imposition of social systems through military intervention or political pressure under the guise of "human rights" must be avoided. Countries whose human rights situations were characterized by racial discrimination, unemployment, homelessness and violence should refrain from quarrelling with other countries on the basis of self-established "standards".

(Mr. Hyon Hak Bong, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

21. The protection and promotion of human rights were the responsibility of the country concerned and could not be imposed by other countries. Only when such issues were dealt with impartially on the basis of respect for the right to self-determination, freedom of choice, non-selectivity, objectivity and cooperation among States could an atmosphere of reconciliation be created in the field of human rights, which would also contribute to equality in international relations.

22. The people of his country participated freely in the formulation and implementation of State policies and enjoyed rights and freedoms in the fields of employment, leisure time, free medical care, free education and the provision of food, clothing and shelter, in a man-centred society which they themselves had chosen and developed.

23. Any past record of human rights violations must be addressed and settled to prevent their recurrence. His delegation drew attention to the abduction during the Second World War of over 200,000 Korean women to serve as "comfort women" for the Japanese armed forces. Such a criminal practice had been recognized as a form of slavery by the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The Government of Japan had so far failed to take tangible measures to resolve the issue. It should offer a sincere apology, conduct a comprehensive investigation, publish the results and publicly pledge that there would be no repetition of such a tragedy.

24. Mrs. HADDAD (Lebanon) said that her delegation welcomed the statement by the Security Council that the non-military sources of instability were threats to peace and security, and strongly supported the Secretary-General's proposal that ways should be explored of empowering the Secretary-General and expert human rights bodies to bring massive violations of human rights to the attention of the Security Council, together with recommendations for action. It was confident that the World Conference on Human Rights would enhance United Nations human rights endeavours and further promote human rights education and awareness. The Conference should be guaranteed the full resources necessary to ensure its success.

25. Her delegation paid tribute to the humanitarian role of the United Nations in providing relief assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina, reiterating its condemnation of the aggression against that country and the grave human rights violations that had ensued. It equally commended United Nations efforts to bring food supplies to the people of Somalia. Lebanon associated itself with the plight of the Palestinian people, who were subjected to constant human rights violations and abuses as a result of the illegal occupation of their land by Israel.

26. For 14 years, the people of southern Lebanon had been suffering from abuses and violations resulting from Israeli air raids, artillery bombing, raids on villages and attacks against the local population, attempts on the lives of political and religious figures, and mass arrests of Lebanese and

(Mrs. Haddad, Lebanon)

Palestinians and their imprisonment in detention camps. Humanitarian organizations were denied access to the camps, where, even after prisoner exchanges, conditions for the remaining prisoners had not improved, as was reflected in reports of torture and the holding of inmates as hostages for exchange purposes.

27. The human rights situation in southern Lebanon under the control of Israel continued to deteriorate. Recent attacks on entire villages had resulted in human casualties and a large-scale exodus of the population. Requests for a reply from Israel by the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General had so far elicited no response. The civilian population continued to be subjected to intolerable levels of deprivation and suffering, with random shelling, curfews, kidnapping, arbitrary detention and torture, sieges of villages, seizure of land and plans to control and divert water resources to Israel.

28. The question of southern Lebanon demanded an immediate solution. Israel continued its aggression and defiance of international resolutions and principles of human rights. Lebanon was especially anxious to see the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

29. Mr. Dekany (Hungary), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

30. Mrs. BARGHOUTI (Observer for Palestine) expressed regret that, despite some progress in monitoring human rights violations, the United Nations continued to deal with human rights violators in a selective manner, as was apparent from its treatment of Israel. For example, Israel, unlike many other countries, had not been singled out for criticism in the 1992 report of the Commission on Human Rights.

31. The serious human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, which stemmed from the occupation itself, was steadily deteriorating. Israel continued to deny the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to recognize the de jure applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 and to implement the relevant United Nations decisions and resolutions, including Security Council resolution 681 (1990). It also failed to comply with other international instruments to which it was a party, including the International Covenants, the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

32. In addition to the tens of thousands of Palestinians killed, injured, imprisoned without charge or trial and detained and the many other human rights violations to which they had been subjected since 1987, a serious development had been the deterioration of the conditions of Palestinian prisoners and detainees. International human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, Middle East Watch and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), had documented various forms of torture of Palestinian political prisoners during interrogation in Israeli detention centres. Recent

(Mrs. Barghouti, Observer, Palestine)

ICRC reports had, inter alia, called on the Israeli Government to put an immediate end to such practices. Her delegation commended the role of ICRC in the field of human rights world wide.

33. Israeli undercover death-squad operations also threatened the lives of the Palestinian people, and the pattern of summary execution had not changed since the new Government had come to power. Israel's policy of large-scale military operations against so-called "wanted" Palestinians had continued.

34. The Israeli military authorities' stated intention of improving the conditions of the Palestinian people must be translated into policy and practice. The Palestinians' freedom to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence could be achieved, and their suffering brought to an end, only through the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and through a comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine.

35. Her delegation had been actively involved in the preparation of the World Conference on Human Rights and would do its utmost to help guarantee its success. It was confident that the Conference would effectively deal with the issues and strive to ensure the right of people to exercise their fundamental rights, including the right to self-determination, and hoped that it would give priority to areas in which gross violations of human rights existed as a result of racism, apartheid, foreign occupation and domination, and colonialism.

36. Mr. SNEGUR (Republic of Moldova) said that his country's new laws and its Constitution, which gave priority to protecting civil and political rights and freedoms, had been drafted in conformity with international standards and human rights instruments. The Moldovan people, which had been denied basic human rights and freedoms for 50 years, had a long-standing record of tolerance and had always lived in harmony with several ethnic groups. His country welcomed the current debate and would cooperate closely with other Member States in upholding the principles of the Charter, especially respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

37. His Government's efforts to establish the rule of law and democratic institutions in the newly independent Republic had been thwarted in the eastern districts of the country, which had been subjected to de facto occupation by a foreign army. The legal Government had been forced out of office and, with the backing of that army, illegitimate local political structures were implementing a systematic policy to deny the Moldovan inhabitants their basic human rights. A state of "unofficial terrorism" prevailed, under which lists of so-called "enemies of the people" had been drawn up, scores of persons had disappeared, later to be found dead, bearing marks of torture, and an aggressive campaign of discrimination in favour of the Russian-speaking inhabitants had been waged. His Government's conclusions on the human rights situation in those districts were borne out by the findings of various international missions, including those dispatched by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

(Mr. Snegur, Republic of Moldova)

38. No distinction could be made between minorities' rights and human rights. His countrymen's long-forbidden right to use their own language and culture was just as important as the right to freedom of speech or movement. The rights of the Russian-speaking population of the eastern districts of the Republic had never been violated. The law on the official Romanian language was one of the most moderate of its kind, and the new law on citizenship entitled all inhabitants to become fully-fledged citizens.

39. Despite the recent agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova and the end to the war, the human rights situation continued to deteriorate in the eastern parts of the country. The army of occupation was still backing violations of law and of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The situation of the Romanian-speaking population was critical. The use of the Latin alphabet and new textbooks was prohibited. Recalcitrant teachers and students had been removed and schools shut down. The media had been subjected to harsh censorship, and all opposition was being silenced. Representatives of ICRC were barred access to political prisoners.

40. He reiterated previous calls for an appropriate United Nations mission to be sent to the region in order to monitor and scrutinize the human rights situation there. Moldova's independence and transition to democracy depended largely on the effectiveness of United Nations mechanisms for guaranteeing the integrity and security of all nations and the protection for their human rights.

41. Mr. BURCUOGLU (Turkey) said that he would limit his remarks to the situation of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was unique by virtue of its nature and gravity. The policy of ethnic cleansing was a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and was in breach of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The three reports prepared by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights had been of great value in shedding light on the true nature of the issues. There was no question as to who was the aggressor in Bosnia and Herzegovina: the sinister role played by the Belgrade regime, assisted by the Yugoslav army and Serbian and Montenegran irregulars, was well documented.

42. From the start of the Serbian aggression, Turkey had proposed a plan involving a phased approach to settling the conflict, which had included measures designed to prevent the Serbian aggressors from massacring civilian populations and violating human rights and international humanitarian law. Had it been effectively applied, the plan would have clearly demonstrated the international community's commitment to the oppressed victims and might have dissuaded the aggressor, thereby sparing the Bosnians the horrors of the past months.

43. Yet, the plan had not met with a positive response from the Security Council, which apparently had had to balance the various sensibilities involved. The Council had in fact taken only half measures, lacking in

(Mr. Burcuoglu, Turkey)

conviction and, what was worse, States had systematically ignored or contravened them. Meanwhile, the Muslim population was being threatened with extermination and, because of the Security Council embargo, the Bosnians were unable to exercise their right to self-defence. It was paradoxical that the efforts of the United Nations to halt the conflict were stalemated at the very moment when it was examining ways of strengthening preventive diplomacy, maintaining peace and dealing with massive violations of human rights. The inadequate response of the United Nations had probably encouraged the Serbians to pursue their policy of ethnic cleansing, which his Government, like many others, considered an act of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

44. In response to the continuing tragedy in the former Yugoslavia, a Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Balkan and Regional Countries had been held in Istanbul on 25 November 1992, at the invitation of his Government. In their Joint Declaration (A/47/742-S/24869, annex), the participants had requested the Foreign Ministers of countries participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to consider convening a meeting in Sarajevo as quickly as possible; called on the relevant international organizations to establish safe areas and corridors for the transport of humanitarian aid in Bosnia and Herzegovina; urged the Security Council to consider deploying forces in Kosovo, Vojvodina, Sandzak and the Republic of Macedonia, and invited the international community to review the necessity of recognizing that Republic.

45. The second special session of the Commission on Human Rights, requested by Turkey, had been held recently in Geneva. The resolution adopted at that session had identified the Bosnians as victims; condemned the Republic of Serbia and the Yugoslav army for their acts of aggression; condemned the bombing of cities and civilian zones; and called on States to consider whether the crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina constituted genocide.

46. The recent special session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers had adopted a resolution which had reaffirmed the Conference's total support for Bosnia and Herzegovina; invoked Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations relating to the right to self-defence and requested the Security Council to apply Article 42 of the Charter.

47. His delegation hoped that the combined weight of those meetings would help persuade the Security Council to put a halt to the Serbian aggression. It was time to make clear to the Belgrade regime that the international community had run out of patience. The Security Council had therefore to take firm action which meant putting an end to Serbian aggression; authorizing the use of force; lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia and Herzegovina; closing all concentration camps and detention centres and freeing all prisoners; investigating and bringing to justice the authors of crimes against humanity; protecting the population by establishing security zones; and ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid.

(Mr. Burcuoglu, Turkey)

48. The Security Council was currently considering the question of the use of force to deliver humanitarian aid to Somalia. That should serve as an inspiration for action to be taken in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

49. Mr. MOTSYK (Ukraine) said that among the first measures adopted by his Government had been legislation to protect human rights and the freedom of belief and religion. It had outlawed political repression, expressed sympathy towards the victims and proclaimed its intention to restore justice and respect for human rights. All citizens were considered equal before the law, whatever their attitude towards religion, and religious holidays had been officially recognized.

50. In response to the new legislation, the number of religious organizations had doubled. National minorities enjoyed the same rights and freedoms as the majority to practise their religions. Unfortunately, the spiritual revival had been accompanied by interfaith conflicts resulting from the gross interference of the former totalitarian authorities in religious matters. Disputes had arisen, for instance, over who had the right to use a particular church; many had been resolved by the construction of new buildings. Because of the economic crisis, such problems had lingered, but on the whole, interfaith conflicts had been depoliticized and, ultimately, reduced.

51. Mr. Krenkel (Austria), Chairman, resumed the Chair.

52. Mrs. MBELLA NGOMBA (Cameroon) said that her Government endorsed United Nations efforts to strengthen regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights. Noteworthy among those efforts was the forthcoming subregional seminar on the challenges to human rights in Central Africa, to be held in Cameroon and organized jointly by the Centre for Human Rights and the Government of Cameroon. Her Government had also demonstrated its commitment to regional approaches by becoming a party to a number of regional human rights instruments.

53. She wished to draw attention to the cooperation between United Nations agencies and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on follow-up and implementation of human rights activities. Noteworthy in that connection was the recent convening, under OAU auspices, with the assistance of the Senegalese Government and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), of the International Conference on Assistance to African Children, as a follow-up to the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children in 1990.

54. The Conference might well herald renewed hope of achieving a comprehensive strategy, for use by donor and recipient countries alike, for alleviating socio-economic problems related to human development in Africa. At the Conference, the African countries had agreed to redeploy their resources and to focus on implementing programmes in the areas of health, basic education, sanitation, and social integration of women and children in especially difficult circumstances. The Conference marked the first time that

(Mrs. Mbella Ngomba, Cameroon)

non-governmental organizations, which provided some 30 per cent of the aid to Africa, had been invited to participate in donor-government discussions. In that framework, the non-governmental organizations had proposed closer cooperation with OAU with a view to implementing national programmes of action and making them part of bilateral and multilateral negotiation processes.

55. Conference participants had put forward a number of other significant ideas. The decision by some donors to increase multilateral aid to programmes for African children was encouraging, and might favourably influence the proposal to increase by 20 per cent official development assistance to such programmes. Her delegation also welcomed the idea of debt-swaps for children's programmes, and the agreement between the African Development Bank and UNICEF to increase resources for national programmes of action. All of those actions marked the start of a new and comprehensive human development strategy for the African region which should strengthen the link between human rights and development.

56. The Conference had laid the groundwork for compliance with international humanitarian law. The participants had pledged to ensure safe passage for children and women out of conflict zones and to exert the greatest possible pressure on the parties to a conflict to guarantee delivery of relief aid, in particular to women and children. Lastly, her Government hoped that forthcoming world conferences would go even further in mobilizing communities to participate fully in human development, the ultimate goal of all human rights endeavours.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.18/Rev.1 on the World Conference on Human Rights

57. Ms. OUARZAZI (Morocco) said that her delegation took great pride in introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the more than 120 sponsors. Reaching agreement on the text had required several months of negotiations beset with what had seemed at times to be insurmountable obstacles. Having proposed in 1989 the convening of a world conference on human rights, Morocco greatly appreciated the preparatory work carried out, including the work of the Centre for Human Rights.

58. The provisional agenda for the Conference, annexed to the draft resolution, had been amended in a spirit of compromise to include an item on recommendations for strengthening international cooperation in the field of human rights, a matter of vital significance to certain delegations. While not perfect, the provisional agenda offered specific means of examining the advances made in the field of human rights, the obstacles encountered and ways to overcome them. The agenda removed women from the general category of vulnerable groups and placed them on an equal footing with men in relation to the realization of human rights. In response to the concerns of many States, the agenda also devoted an item to the relationship between development, democracy and human rights in the context of the indivisibility of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.57 on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in El Salvador

59. Mr. MARTINI HERRERA (Guatemala), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and the Dominican Republic, said that the draft resolution was the result of careful negotiations and was designed to bring about an early solution to the conflict. It reflected the progress made under the Peace Agreements between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional. After reviewing the contents of the draft, he said the sponsors hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.65 on human rights and extreme poverty

60. Mr. LAZARO (Peru) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Ecuador, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal. The draft resolution conformed closely with the wording of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1992/11. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.66 on the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

61. Mr. THEUERMANN (Austria), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Malawi and the Republic of Korea, said that the Declaration annexed to the draft resolution represented the results of four decades of work to develop international instruments containing principles and guidelines for the promotion and protection of minorities. It enumerated several rights of minorities, including the right to enjoy their own culture, to use their own language, to participate effectively in all spheres of public life and to establish and maintain their own associations. States were required to adopt the appropriate legislation to protect the existence and identity of minorities. Given the fact that the Declaration had been approved by the Commission on Human Rights and by the Economic and Social Council, he expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft declaration A/C.3/47/L.67 on summary or arbitrary executions

62. Ms. PENNEGARD (Sweden) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Benin, Kenya, Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Senegal. The draft resolution condemned the summary or arbitrary executions which continued to take place throughout the world and appealed for action to eliminate them. The draft resolution reaffirmed the decision of the Commission on Human Rights to appoint a special rapporteur to consider that issue and requested the Commission, on the basis of the report of the Special Rapporteur, to make recommendations concerning appropriate action. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.68 on alternative ways for improving the enjoyment of human rights

63. Mrs. VALLE (Cuba) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Angola, India, Namibia and Zambia. The draft resolution upheld two essential ideas, namely, that all human rights and fundamental freedoms were indivisible and interdependent and that the right to development was the most important of all human rights. The right to development was the only hope for overcoming the profound inequities that had developed between the North and South.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.69 on periodic and genuine elections

64. Mr. PRESSLER (United States of America) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Canada, Chad, Nicaragua and Samoa. In recent years, the world had witnessed a resurgence of democracy and greater respect for human rights, which were sustained by free and fair elections. The draft resolution helped to define United Nations participation in electoral processes and enjoyed broad support from every region of the globe. It welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to establish a focal point for electoral verification and an Electoral Assistance Unit within the Secretariat; that unit would be financed from the regular budget. The guidelines referred to as "provisional" would be tested and refined in light of the experience of the following two years. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.70 on the situation of human rights in Cuba

65. Mrs. TAHIR-KHELI (United States of America) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal and Romania. The draft resolution was the product of several years of United Nations attention to the human rights situation in Cuba. The current session of the General Assembly was focusing on the conclusions offered to it by the Special Rapporteur on Cuba, who had produced an exceptionally detailed report despite that country's refusal to cooperate with him and the Commission on Human Rights. That report described the freedoms absent from Cuban society. The draft resolution reflected the Special Rapporteur's conclusions and recommendations and reaffirmed the obligations of Member States to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. She hoped that the Government of Cuba would allow the Special Rapporteur to visit and talk with the people. She asked that the draft resolution should be adopted as a clear message that the United Nations was concerned about human rights in Cuba and as a statement of support for the integrity of the entire system.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.71 on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan

66. The CHAIRMAN introduced the draft resolution, which he had submitted and expressed the hope that it would be adopted without a vote, as in previous years.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.